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Playing Accessory Percussion Correctly

**CLINICIAN:
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Playing Accessory Percussion Correctly

“Where to start?”

1. Instruments
 - a. Introductory models vs professional models
 - i. Budget
 - ii. Usage
 - iii. Composition of materials
 - iv. Storage
2. Stroke (Keep it simple)
 - a. Start (How to approach the instrument)
 - b. Middle (How long the sound lasts)
 - c. End (The follow thru of the stroke)
3. Technique
 - a. Driven by what is required.
 - b. Simple and Basic
 - c. Use Relaxed, Confident Posture
 - d. Experiment and Explore
 - e. Use the videos of professionals as models
4. Ensemble Concept
 - a. What type of sound are you striving for?
 - i. Warm
 - ii. Dark
 - iii. Light
 - iv. Heavy
 - b. What is your setup? Does everything have a place?

"Big 4"

Tambourine

1. Posture
 - a. Hold the Tambourine at a 45-degree angle.
 - b. Hold at the sternum or middle of the chest.
 - c. Make sure you can see the conductor and music when playing.
2. Stroke
 - a. General Stroke- Bird's Beak
 - b. Louder or Fuller Stroke- Fist
 - c. Softer playing- Smaller Bird's Beak (Fewer fingers)
 - d. Faster Passages

- i. Softer passages: The Tambourine rests at an angle on a stand with a towel, hip, or drum. The jingles need to be kept at rest on an incline.
 - ii. Louder passages- Knee to Hand Combination
 - a. Try to balance it.
 - b. Use your arm to move the Tambourine.
- 3. Rolls
 - a. Regular Shake Roll
 - i. It starts and ends with a release.
 - ii. When shaking, use your wrist. (Cow-a-bunga dude!)
 - iii. Stay Vertical. Compact motion and stay relaxed.
 - b. Hybrid Shake Roll
 - i. It starts and ends with a release.
 - ii. Combination of using wrist and arms. (Cow-a-bunga dude! Plus Fanning motion)
 - iii. Stay Vertical. Compact motion and stay relaxed.
 - iv. Breathe
 - c. Thumb Roll/ Finger Roll
 - i. Skips along the surface
 - ii. Use Beeswax or soy wax.
 - iii. Use different angles to help manipulate the sound.
 - d. Combinations
 - i. Be creative.
 - ii. There is more than one way to do it.
 - iii. Just go with what sounds good.
 - e. Instruments
 - i. Do your research on which one is best for you.
 - ii. Cost and Durability
 - iii. The type of jingles matter.
 - a. Single row vs Double Row
 - b. Copper vs. silver vs combination metals
 - iv. Brands
 - a. Grover
 - b. Black Swamp
 - c. Remo (Headless tambourine)
 - d. Latin Percussion (Headless tambourine)
 - v. Potential Issues
 - a. Weather
 - b. Durability

Crash Cymbals

1. Posture
 - a. Stand up straight and stay relaxed.
 - b. Hold cymbals like a snare drumstick.
 - i. Fulcrum
 - c. The playing position is usually between your chest and waist, depending on the technique and cymbal size.
 - d. Make sure you can see the conductor and music.
2. Stroke
 - a. Play wall ball.
 - b. Use your wrist and stay relaxed.
 - i. Use gravity to help it out.
 - c. Flam
 - i. One cymbal edge hits before the other one.
 - ii. Air pocket: Both edges hit at the same time.
 - iii. Toss the bottom cymbal up a little bit for more significant crashes.
 - d. Follow Thru
 - i. Let the cymbals ring.
 - ii. Positioning of cymbals after a crash does affect what you hear.
 - iii. Sound is more important than what it looks like.
3. Dynamics
 - a. Soft crashes
 - i. Vertical
 - ii. Edges closer together
 - iii. Very little flam
 - b. Loud Crashes
 - i. 45 degrees to almost horizontal
 - ii. Wide flam
 - iii. Add a slight toss-up at the bottom
 - c. Practice crescendos and decrescendos.
 - i. 90 degrees to 45 degrees to 90 degrees
4. Types of Cymbals
 - a. Marching vs Concert
 - b. French= Thinner (Lighter)
 - c. Viennese= Medium
 - d. German= Thicker and Heavier (Darker)
5. Brands
 - a. Sabian (HHX)
 - b. Zildjian (Classic Orchestra, A Orchestral)

Suspended Cymbals

1. Posture
 - a. Stand up straight.
 - b. The cymbal should be a flat horizontal setup using a cymbal or gooseneck stand.
 - c. Height is usually around the waist. However, there are exceptions.
2. Playing
 - a. Think of a cymbal as a clock. 9 and 3 on the dial.
 - b. Play about an inch from the edge.
3. Rolling
 - a. Use a yarn mallet for rolls.
 - b. Roll as slow as possible.
 - c. Think of crescendos or decrescendos as being half as long as notated.
 - d. Listen to the cymbal to avoid overrolling.
4. Rhythmic Figures
 - a. Using a stick
 - i. Bell vs. shoulder vs edge
5. Sound
 - a. Overtones vs Fundamental (Wrist vs Arm)
6. Sizes
 - a. 18 in to 22 in
7. Types of other cymbals
 - a. Ride Cymbal- Drum Set cymbal. It doesn't rise as you play it.
 - b. China Cymbal- Lower sound. Twang
 - c. Splash Cymbal- Smaller cymbal and quick response.
 - d. Swiss Knocker- Looks like a China cymbal with Rivets
 - e. Sizzle Cymbal- Regular Cymbal with rivets or chain
8. Brands
 - a. Sabian (HHX Symphonic, Orchestral)
 - b. Zildjian (K Constantiople, A Orchestral)
 - c. Paiste
 - d. Dream

Triangles

1. Posture
 - a. Stand up straight.
 - b. Use a clip if possible.
 - i. Use a fishing line with an extra safety loop.
 - c. Pretend you are holding a Coke can.
 - i. Thumb underneath the back of the clip. Beak in between the index and middle finger.
 - d. Hold the triangle up so that the clip is around your nose.
2. Playing
 - a. Triangle Beater
 - i. Weiss beater, Tube beater, Stoessal Beater

- ii. Smaller beaters equal more petite sound; more giant beaters mean more sound
 - iii. Use your ears.
 - b. The 45-degree angle of the beater when playing
 - i. More overtones vs more fundamental
 - c. Different parts of the triangle sound different. Be consistent in sound.
 - d. When rolling, use the corner of the triangle.
 - i. Wavy pencil
- 3. Brands of Triangle (All good, all different)
 - a. Alan Abel
 - b. Black Swamp
 - c. Grover
 - d. Ziljdian
 - e. Sabian
- 4. Sizes
 - a. 6 in is usually standard. Though different pieces use different sizes now. 4in to 10in triangles.

“Other Commonly Used Accessories”

Claves

- 1. Types
 - a. Fiberglass vs Wood
- 2. Playing position
 - a. Hot Dog
 - b. Stay relaxed to let the instrument resonate.
- 3. Brand
 - a. Latin Percussion
 - b. Steve Weiss
 - c. Meinl

Cabasa

- 1. Playing
 - a. Let cabasa's beads rest in the nondominant hands.
 - b. Use the dominant hand to twist back and forth to create the rhythm.
 - c. Use snappy, short strokes to make it work.
- 2. Special techniques
 - a. Use your fingers for faster passages.
 - b. Use it as a shaker.
- 3. Brand
 - a. Latin Percussion
 - b. Liberty One
 - c. Meinl

Shaker

1. Instruments
 - a. Tube vs. Egg Shakers
 - i. Different colors have different volumes.
2. Playing
 - a. Use your arm to throw the beads forward and backward. It is easier if they are up around your head. It also looks more relaxed.
3. Brand
 - a. Latin Percussion
 - b. Liberty One
 - c. Meinl

Sleigh Bells

1. Instrument
 - a. Fewer Jingles might be handy. Take away the bottom jingle and maybe one side of the jingles.
 - b. Lightweight. Gets heavy afterwhile
2. Playing
 - a. Tap the top of the stem to play. Hold in nondominant hand. Use dominant to play.
 - i. Fist vs. Palm
 - ii. Shake like a shaker when in doubt.
3. Brand
 - a. Steve Weiss
 - b. Toca
 - c. Grover

Castanets

1. Instrument
 - a. Machine vs Free
2. Playing
 - a. Using your hands vs your knee.
3. Castanet Rolls
 - a. Use your knee and have one finger resting on top of the castanets. It creates almost a flaming sound and just alternates.
4. Brand
 - a. Black Swamp
 - b. Latin Percussion
 - c. Grover
 - d. Epstein

Maracas

1. Types
 - a. Wood vs. Fiberglass vs Plastic
2. Playing
 - a. Use your arm to throw the beads forward and backward.
 - b. Slight downward angle for faster passages.
 - i. Knee
3. Rolls
 - a. Shake
 - b. Swirl
4. Brand
 - a. Latin Percussion
 - b. Black Swamp
 - c. Meinl

Vibraslap

1. Playing
 - a. Use your palm and follow through.
2. Brand
 - a. Liberty One
 - b. Latin Percussion
 - c. Toca

Wood Block/ Temple Blocks

1. Types
 - a. Graphite vs Wood
2. Playing
 - a. Use a softer rubber mallet or stick.
 - b. Play on the edge.
 - c. Be careful not to crack the wood.
3. Notation
 - a. Runs high to low.
4. Brand
 - a. Grover
 - b. Black Swamp
 - c. Meinl

Guiro

1. Types
 - a. Wood vs Plastic
2. Playing
 - a. Use a long thin stick or plastic stick.
 - b. Alternate the strokes forward and backwards.
 - i. Spread the butter on the toast.
3. Brands

- a. Latin Percussion
- b. Toca

Bongos/ Congas

- 1. Playing
 - a. Use your fingers and hands to play the drums.
 - b. Make sure they are tuned properly.
 - c. Sometimes you can use sticks for bongos.
 - d. Sometimes you can use yarn mallets for congas.
 - e. You can use stands or play in the traditional seated way.
- 2. Brands
 - a. Latin Percussion
 - b. Pearl
- 3. Tuning
 - a. Conga
 - i. 11" Quinto: C5-G5
 - ii. 11.75" Conga: A4-E5
 - iii. 12.5" Tumba: C4-Bb4
 - iv. 14" Super Tumba: A3-G4
 - b. Bongo
 - i. Tuning varies depending on the style.
 - ii. Try to have a 4th or 5th between the drums.

General Thoughts

- 1. It should sound smooth and relaxed.
- 2. Accessories are color instruments. Not volume instruments.
- 3. Have fun and be creative.
- 4. Use resources that are around you to have fun with.
- 5. Plan your setups for your percussion students.
- 6. Use towels and tray tables for ease of travel.
- 7. Teach them to be little ninjas when moving around.



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